



# THE OBSERVER

**ORDINARILY** Kansans do not look to Tennessee for ideas calculated to stimulate agricultural development. Kansas can give Tennessee cards and spades and beat her to a standstill in agriculture. In fact, Tennessee is hardly to be mentioned in the same breath with Kansas when agriculture is being discussed. However, and nevertheless and notwithstanding, an idea has come out of Tennessee that is mightily worth while to commercial organizations in Kansas interested in agricultural development. At Memphis a new bureau has been organized among business men, and \$25,000 has been subscribed to its support in its first year to undertake the work of organizing farm development branches in 281 towns in the radius of Memphis trading territory. This organization will preach method and co-ordination in agricultural production and marketing. Agriculture is the greatest resource of a prairie state like ours and while manufacturing industries are of course worth while to any community, there are difficulties in the way of establishing manufacturing centers on the plains that many hard working town boomers have found to be well-nigh insurmountable. Why is it not, therefore, a very practical thing for Commercial Clubs and other business organizations in Kansas to take up the Memphis idea? To work toward agricultural development in Kansas is certainly following the line of least resistance. We must all agree that much time has been wasted in effort to garner manufacturing plants and new industries with doubtful economic results, while rich agricultural lands were left to produce a fraction of their maximum under unintelligent cultivation and distribution. Why cannot Kansas commercial organizations concentrate in a common sense campaign to get the best possible results from the state's greatest resource—agriculture?

**T**HERE is something in the average American that makes him take to a scuffle to build his community into a center of manufacturing industry much as a duck takes to water. He seems to like the rustle and bustle of crowded, busy life and there are few Western towns in which the most public spirited and active citizens do not dream of an industrial development that will transform a village into an industrial center. These dreams are too frequently indulged without real consideration of whether the best interests of the community are dependent upon the establishment of "industries." Every Kansas town is in a sense a center for the greatest of all human industries—agriculture. Every Kansas town will develop as its greatest tributary industry develops and it will develop along lines too that do not bring the perplexing and worrisome social and economic problems that are being threshed out in the cities. And so, in the judgment of this writer, the

Kansas town that is ambitious to make itself a center of a rich agricultural community, cultivated intelligently and productive in a maximum degree, is pursuing an ideal ambition. The condition of the average man, morally and materially, is always best in agricultural sections, and there is more real human profit in development along lines that make for the condition under which the average man is best off than there is pursuing the dream of city building. A sensible "back to the farm movement", which involves the co-operation of the men in our towns and villages in work to make Kansas the greatest agricultural section of the country, will do more for the state than all the campaigns ever waged to build factories on these prairies.

**EVERY** now and then, we run across something calculated to set us to thinking that Solomon knew whereof he spoke when he remarked that "there is nothing new under the sun". The attention of the writer was the other day attracted to the fact that a school board in Lancaster, Ohio, some seventy-five years ago refused to permit the use of a school-house for a discussion of whether railroads are practical or not, for the reason that railroads "are a device of Satan to lead immortal souls down to hell". So it seems that it is nothing new for public officers to view railroads as objects of suspicion.

**COMPLAINT** is frequently made that graduates of agricultural and mechanical colleges do not return to the farm, and that the cost of their education is therefore lost to the state. While there is a lack of real foundation for the complaint, when it is analyzed, there is just enough truth in it to embarrass college faculties in framing an answer that will convince and satisfy the public, especially farmers. While it is true that most of the graduates do not return to the plow, it would be a mistake to say that the state has lost the service of their specialized education. Many of them engage in banking and merchandising, and in practically every instance it will be found that their effort and influence have been steadily toward agricultural development. And it is for influence on its agricultural development that the state looks to an agricultural college, rather than for an increased number of hands on the farms.

**VARIOUS** newspapers have published an interview with General Joffre, head of the French armies, to which American thought may be directed with profit in connection with discussion of military preparedness. General Joffre makes an interesting distinction between the militarism of Germany and the militarism of France. In his view, Germany presents a military organization which is the government, and to which all other gov-

ernmental functions are subordinated. France on the other hand, presents a military organization incident to the government for use in protecting the government in the discharge of its other functions. He views the German army as the arm of a reigning house, to be used to maintain its power and to further its aggressive policies. The French army he represents as simply an organization of French people against aggression. Whether General Joffre is correct in his analysis of the differences between the spirit of the German and French armies is not particularly important, from an American standpoint. However, he does make it plain that it is possible to maintain adequate military organization without militarism in the sense that militarism is offensive to American traditions and ideals, a military organization that is incidental to the government rather than a government ideal. Whatever France may have done, or may be doing, America is not seeking war and will not provoke war for her own aggrandizement. There is growing sentiment that we have not provided adequately for the national defense, and military preparation will be the most interesting and vital question discussed by Congress at its approaching session. It is worth while, therefore, to keep in mind the distinctions General Joffre seeks to make. While Americans may agree that our military defense should be strengthened, we will have little patience with military plans that contemplate making the people the servants of the army, rather than to provide an army of and from the people, to be used in the defense of the people.

## DIDN'T NEED EVIDENCE

John Hunt, now assistant attorney general of Kansas, was formerly an attorney for the Missouri and Kansas Telephone Company. Shortly after the Public Utilities law, subjecting telephone companies to regulation by the Utilities Commission, became effective, Hunt appeared before the Commission to make a showing in connection with a complaint that had been filed against the company he represented. To Hunt, the complaint seemed to be unreasonable from a practical standpoint. After making a statement of his views he said: "If the Commission please, I do not wish to take up your time unnecessarily in the presentation of evidence showing that this complaint is without foundation, although we can make a showing by competent evidence that will assuredly convince you that this application for additional service should not be granted. If the Commission please, I will be glad to offer this evidence." Captain White, who was then serving as chairman of the Commission, reflected for a moment and then announced: "The Commission does not care to hear any evidence, Mr. Hunt." Hunt left the Statehouse feeling that his case had been won. He reported at the telephone office that the Commission had viewed the complaint as so unreasonable that it did not even desire to hear evidence in defense. And then the next day, much to his astonishment and disappointment, he received word that the complaint had been sustained and the application of the complainants granted. Since which time, John Hunt has been a trifle "gun shy" of statements from a Commission that it has heard enough evidence from his side of a controversy.